United Nations CEDAW/C/PSWG/59/1

Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women

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Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women
Pre-sessional working group
Fifty-ninth session
3-7 March 2014

Consideration of reports submitted by States parties under article 18 of the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women

Report of the pre-sessional working group

1. It is the practice of the Committee on the Elimination of Discrimination against Women to convene a pre-sessional working group for five days to prepare lists of issues and questions relating to the initial and periodic reports that will be considered by the Committee at one of its future sessions.

2. The Committee decided that the pre-sessional working group for the fifty-ninth session of the Committee would meet from 3 to 7 March 2014, immediately after the fifty-seventh session, in order to ensure that sufficient time would be available to States parties to submit their written replies to the lists of issues and questions, as well as to ensure their timely translation.

3. The following experts were designated as members of the pre-sessional working group:

Ms. Feride Acar
Ms. Barbara Bailey
Ms. Ismat Jahan
Ms. Dalia Leinarte
Ms. Pramila Patten

4. The pre-sessional working group elected Ms. Jahan as its Chair.

5. The pre-sessional working group prepared lists of issues and questions with regard to the reports of Belgium, Brunei Darussalam, China, Ghana, Guinea, Poland, Solomon Islands and Venezuela (Bolivarian Republic of). In that regard, the pre-sessional working group was guided by Committee decision 49/IX, according to which the Committee decided to limit the lists of issues and questions to 20 questions. In practice and exceptionally, some lists of issues and questions contain a maximum of 21 questions.

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6. To assist in the preparation of the lists of issues and questions, the pre-sessional working group had before it the reports of the States parties listed above, as well as the core documents of most of those States parties; the general recommendations adopted by the Committee; background information and draft lists of issues and questions prepared by the secretariat; and other pertinent information, including concluding observations of the Committee and other treaty bodies, if relevant. In preparing the lists of issues and questions for periodic reports, the pre-sessional working group paid particular attention to the States parties' follow-up to the concluding observations of the Committee on their previous reports, if applicable (not for initial reports).

7. The pre-sessional working group benefited from written and oral information submitted by entities and specialized agencies of the United Nations system, national human rights institutions and non-governmental organizations.

8. The lists of issues and questions adopted by the pre-sessional working group were transmitted to the States parties concerned and are contained in the following documents:

(a) List of issues and questions in relation to the seventh periodic report of Belgium (CEDAW/C/BEL/Q/7);

(b) List of issues and questions in relation to the combined initial and second periodic reports of Brunei Darussalam (CEDAW/C/BRN/Q/1-2);

(c) List of issues and questions in relation to the combined seventh and eighth periodic reports of China (CEDAW/C/CHN/Q/7-8);

(d) List of issues and questions in relation to the combined sixth and seventh periodic reports of Ghana (CEDAW/C/GHA/Q/6-7);

(e) List of issues and questions in relation to the combined seventh and eighth periodic reports of Guinea (CEDAW/C/GIN/Q/7-8);

(f) List of issues and questions in relation to the combined seventh and eighth periodic reports of Poland (CEDAW/C/POL/Q/7-8);

(g) List of issues and questions in relation to the combined initial to third periodic reports of Solomon Islands (CEDAW/C/SLB/Q/1-3/Add.2);

(h) List of issues and questions in relation to the combined seventh and eighth periodic reports of the Bolivarian Republic of Venezuela (CEDAW/C/VEN/Q/7-8).

9. In accordance with Committee decisions 22/IV, 25/II and 31/III, the lists of issues and questions focused on themes addressed by the Convention on the Elimination of All Forms of Discrimination against Women. These themes included the constitutional and legislative framework; women, peace and security, where applicable; national machinery for the advancement of women; stereotypes and harmful practices; violence against women, including domestic violence; trafficking in women and exploitation of prostitution; participation of women in decision-making; education and training; employment; health; social and economic benefits; rural women; the situation of disadvantaged groups of women, such as older women, women with disabilities, women belonging to ethnic minorities, and refugee and migrant women; equality before the law; and marriage and family relations.